

# Foster and Homeless Children Support

**Data Collections Conference**  
**August 25, 2016**

**Federal Programs**  
**Grants Unit**

**Eric McGhee, Grants Program Manager**

# Agenda

McKinney-Vento Act

Foster Care

Data Collection

ESSA Authority



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Georgia's School Superintendent  
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# McKinney-Vento Act

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# McKinney-Vento Act



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## Definition of Homeless Students

### ❑ Individuals whose nighttime residence is NOT:

- Fixed—stationary, permanent, and not subject to change
- Regular—used on a predictable, routine, or consistent basis
- Adequate—sufficient for meeting both the physical and psychological needs typically met in the home

(42 U.S.C. §11434A(2)(B)(i))

*Can the student go to the SAME PLACE (fixed) EVERY NIGHT (regular) to sleep in a SAFE AND SUFFICIENT SPACE (adequate)?*

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## The Homeless definition includes children and youth who are:

- Sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or similar reason;
- Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due the lack of alternative accommodations;
- Living in emergency or transitional shelters;
- Abandoned in hospitals;

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## Homeless also includes children and youth who are:

- Awaiting foster care placement; *Removed with passage of Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)*
- Living in a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings;
- Living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus/train stations, or similar settings;
- Migratory – who qualify as homeless living in circumstances described above.

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## Definition of Unaccompanied Homeless Youth (UHY)

- Unaccompanied = not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian; in practical terms, this means the youth does not live with the parent or guardian.**
  
- 2-Step Process:**
  - 1. Does the student's living arrangement meet the McKinney-Vento Act's definition of homeless?**
  - 2. Once homelessness is determined, is the student unaccompanied?**

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- Unaccompanied youth have the same rights as other students experiencing homelessness.
  
- Unaccompanied youth have run away from home, been thrown out of their homes, and/or been abandoned by parents or guardians. These young people are separated from their parents for a variety of reasons:
  - Over half report being physically abused at home.
  - Over one third report sexual abuse.
  - Over two-thirds report that at least one of their parents abuses drugs or alcohol.

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## Impact of Homelessness on Children...

- 83% of homeless children have been exposed to at least one serious violent event.
- Four times more likely to have health problems;
- Twice as likely to go hungry;
- Three times more likely to have emotional and behavioral problems;
- Fewer than 25% of homeless children graduate from high school.
- 30% of foster care children could return home – if they had a home

*Merkert and Wintermute - CLN Kids, 2012*

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## Impact of Homelessness on Children...

- Half of homeless mothers experience severe depression;
- One-third of mothers have made at least one suicide attempt;
- Over one-third have a chronic physical health condition.
- 30% of homeless adults in the U.S. were foster children; these adults are twice as likely to have their own children placed in foster homes.

*Merkert and Wintermute - CLN Kids, 2012*

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## Discussion Questions

- Who should parents or guardians and/or unaccompanied youth contact to advocate for students experiencing homelessness?
- Given the sensitive nature of homelessness, how should stakeholders protect the privacy of families experiencing homelessness?

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# Foster Care

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# Foster Care

Foster care means 24-hour substitute care for children placed away from their parents or guardians and for whom the State agency has placement and care responsibility. This includes, but is not limited to, placements in foster family homes, foster homes of relatives, group homes, emergency shelters, residential facilities, child care institutions, and preadoptive homes.

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# Foster Care

## Educational Programming, Assessment, and Consultation (EPAC)

- The EPAC Unit provides comprehensive academic support services focusing on improving educational outcomes and the academic achievement of children and youth, ages 5 to 17 in the custody of Georgia Division of Family and Children Services. EPAC services are supported through TANF funding and are initiated through case manager or CPS referrals. Upon initial placement into foster care, children and youth are referred to EPAC for a comprehensive diagnostic educational assessment and subsequently, are monitored for ensuring adequate academic progress.

# Foster Care

## Foster Care and Education

- Number of children and youth in foster care on 9/30/2012 nationally
  - **397,122**
- Percent of 17-18 year olds in care who have experienced 5+ school changes
  - **34%**
- Percent of 17-18 year old foster youth who want to go to college
  - **84%**
- Percent of foster youth who graduated from high school who attend college
  - **20%**
- Percent of former foster youth who attain a certificate/AA/bachelor's degree
  - **9%**

# Foster Care

## By age 24...

	Foster Youth	Comparison
<input type="checkbox"/> Ever homeless	24%	NA
<input type="checkbox"/> Currently employed	48%	74%
<input type="checkbox"/> Women ever pregnant	75%	40%
<input type="checkbox"/> Median income	\$8,000	\$18,300
<input type="checkbox"/> Men convicted of crime	59%	10%
<input type="checkbox"/> Women convicted of crime	28%	2%

Mark Courtney, et al, Midwest Evaluation of the Adult Functioning of Former Foster Youth: Outcomes at Age 23 and 24, Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago, 2011. Comparison group for this study: National Longitudinal Study Of Adolescent Health



# Foster Care

## Discussion Questions

- Who should foster parents contact to advocate for students experiencing homelessness?
- Given the sometimes traumatic nature of foster care, what resources would you seek to help foster care youth be resilient?

# Data Collection



# Data Collection

## Data Collection - Annual Survey Requirement

### All LEAs

- Number of homeless children & youth identified
- Primary Nighttime Residence
- Grade levels

### LEAs with Sub-Grants

- Number of homeless children & youth served by sub-grant funding
- Number of children receiving educational and school support services
- Barriers to the education of homeless children & youth

# Data Collection



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- ENVIRONMENT CODE** indicates the type of residential environment in which a student resides or the type of school the student attended at anytime during this school year at this school. Code only those students for whom one of the codes below apply. For students where codes do not apply, leave blank.
- Data Element ID: STU045
- Layout ID: C045

Environment Code	Description
1	Resides in a local institution for neglected
2	Resides in a local institution for delinquent
3	Homeless
4	Unaccompanied Homeless Youth

# Data Collection

## Primary Nighttime Residence

### Shelters

- Transitional housing, Awaiting Foster Care

### Doubled-up

- Living with another family

### Unsheltered

- Cars, Parks, Campgrounds, Abandoned buildings, Temporary trailer

### Hotels/Motels

### There is no "Other" category

# Data Collection

Georgia – Children and youth experiencing homelessness identified by LEAs:

- FY15 = 39,113**
- FY14 = 29,138
- FY13 = 35,764
- FY12 = 35,048
- FY11 = 31,384
- FY10 = 27,338
- FY09 = 23,724
- FY08 = 15,700

*GaDOE Student Information System (SIS) – Unduplicated count within each LEA*

# Data Collection

## Children in Foster Care

- GA children in care on September 30, 2015 = **10,900**
- GA children in non-relative foster care on September 30, 2015 = **6235/10,930 (57%)**
- GA children in relative foster care on September 30, 2015 = **2,624/10,930 (24%)**
- GA children in pre-adoptive home on September 30, 2015 = **90/10,930 (1%)**
- GA children in group home on September 30, 2015 = **44/10,930 (0%)**
- GA children in child caring institution on September 30, 2015 = **1,737/10,930 (16%)**
- GA children on a home visit on September 30, 2015 = **160/10,930 (1%)**
- GA children on runaway list on September 30, 2015 = **37/10,930 (0%)**
- GA children in Independent Living Program (ILP) on September 30, 2015 = **3/10,930 (0%)**

Summary Measures: Children in Foster Care - Georgia Department of Human Services (DHS)

# Data Collection

## Children in Foster Care

- GA children in care on October 1, 2014 -  
September 30, 2015 = **17,606**
- Average statewide monthly cost for children in  
care = **\$15,664,882**



# Data Collection

## Discussion Questions

- Given the growing number of foster care youth and students experiencing homelessness, what would you like school systems to implement in order to meet the students' academic needs?
  
- Do you know about community resources that could assist the success foster care youth and students experiencing homelessness.

# ESSA Authority



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## New ESSA Authority - Homeless

- States must have procedures to identify and remove barriers that prevent youth from receiving appropriate credit for full or partial coursework satisfactorily completed while attending a prior school, in accordance with State, local, and school policies.
- Local liaisons must ensure that unaccompanied homeless youth have opportunities to meet the same State academic achievement standards as the State establishes for other children and youth, including by implementing procedures to remove barriers that prevent homeless youth from receiving credit for full or partial coursework satisfactorily completed at a prior school.
- State plans must describe how homeless youth will receive assistance from school counselors to advise, prepare, and improve their readiness for college.
- Local liaisons must ensure that unaccompanied homeless youth informed of their status as independent students for college financial aid and may obtain assistance to receive verification for the FAFSA.

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## New ESSA Authority - Homeless

- All LEAs that receive Title I Part A funds must reserve funds to support homeless students. Previously, LEAs that had all Title I schools did not have to reserve funds for homeless students.
- The amount of Title I funds reserved for homeless children and youth may be determined based on a needs assessment, and must be based on the total allocation received by the LEA and reserved prior to any allowable expenditure of transfers by the LEA.
- Title I funds reserved for homeless children and youth may be used for services not ordinarily provided by Title I, including local liaisons and transportation to the school of origin.
- State report cards must include disaggregated information on the graduation rates and academic achievement of homeless children and youth, and children and youth in foster care.

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## New ESSA Authority - Homeless

- The definition of school of origin includes the designated receiving school at the next grade level for all feeder schools, when a student completes the final grade level served by the school of origin. The determination of whether it is in a student's best interest to follow the feeder school pattern is subject to the same process as other best interest determinations.
- When a student obtains permanent housing, transportation to the school of origin must be provided until the end of the academic year, if it is in the student's best interest to remain in that school.

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## New ESSA Authority – Homeless Title I, Part A reservation

- ❑ Funds available under ESSA may be used to provide homeless children and youths with services not ordinarily provided to other students under those sections, including supporting the liaison designated pursuant the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, and providing transportation.
- ❑ ESSA expands the use of Title I funds to support homeless children and youth for the following requirements under McKinney-Vento:
  - Local homeless liaison.
  - Transportation to and from school of origin.

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## New ESSA Authority – Homeless Title I, Part A reservation

- ❑ The authority to use Title I for transportation of students experiencing homelessness does NOT:
  - Absolve LEA Transportation Departments from the responsibility to transport students experiencing homelessness, or
  - Supplant an LEA's obligation to use local and state funds for transportation
- ❑ Costs that may be charged to Title I are the incremental costs to transport a homeless child or youth to his or her school of origin that are above what the LEA would otherwise provide to transport the student to his or her assigned school.

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## New ESSA Authority – Foster Care

State Title I Plans must describe the steps the SEA will take to ensure collaboration with the State child welfare agency to ensure the educational stability of children or youth in foster care, including assurances that:

- Foster youth are enrolled or remain in their school of origin, unless a determination is made that it is not in their best interest.
- The determination will be based on best interest factors, including consideration of the appropriateness of the current educational setting, and the proximity to the school in which the child is enrolled at the time of placement.
- When a determination is made that it is not in the child's best interest to remain in the school of origin, the child will be immediately enrolled in a new school.
- The SEA will designate a point of contact for child welfare agencies, who will oversee implementation of the SEA responsibilities.
- The SEA point of contact may not be the same person as the State Coordinator for homeless children and youth under the McKinney-Vento Act.



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## New ESSA Authority – Foster Care

- Designate a point of contact for the local child welfare agency, if the local child welfare agency notifies the LEA, in writing, that it has designated a point of contact for the LEA.
- Creates new Title I, Part A assurances that will provide ALL children in any stage of foster care proceedings with McKinney-Vento-like rights and protections.
- LEAs are not required to provide school of origin transportation, if there are additional costs, unless they are reimbursed by the child welfare agency or agree to provide it.
- Removes awaiting foster care placement from the McKinney-Vento Act one year after enactment.

# ESSA Authority



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## New ESSA Authority – Foster Care

### Local transportation procedures must:

- ❑ Ensure that foster youth who need transportation to the school of origin promptly receive it in a cost-effective manner, and in accordance with the child welfare agency's authority to use child welfare funding available under section 475(4)(A) of Title IV-E of the Social Security Act to provide transportation.
- ❑ Ensure that if there are additional costs incurred in providing transportation to the school of origin, LEAs will provide it if:
  - They are reimbursed by the child welfare agency;
  - The LEA agrees to pay the costs; or
  - The LEA and the child welfare agency agree to share the costs.

# ESSA Authority

## Discussion Questions

- What differences do you see between how one should advocate for foster care youth and their families versus students experiencing homelessness and their families? Any similarities?
- What would you do to advocate for a foster care youth and/or a student experiencing homelessness that had an academic need?
- As a person advocates for a foster care youth and/or a student experiencing homelessness, what support would you expect to see from:
  - The school system?
  - Child welfare?
  - Higher Education?

# Questions



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